**UUP Veteran Affairs Committee Notes**

**February 3, 2012**

**Albany DA**

Attendance (guest \*):

Gina Doty Tommie Babbs

William Borgstede Clifford DaVis

Edward Hanley John T. Hogle

Bob Kasprak Mike Knee

Norman Payne Louis Scala

David M. Scholl Jefferey Gordon

Kathleen Southerton \* David Foti

Jacqui Berger \*

*Note: Action Items*

1. Veterans Day Parade in NY City (Bob K): Bob attends this annual parade and he ensures the UUP floral wreath is ordered for the event and delivered. Bob does a superb job representing UUP at this annual parade. Bob thinks that at the 2012 parade special passes may be needed due to tighter security. The parade is growing each year. It is an exciting day.
* While at the well attended parade he met and spoke with our May 2011 DA guest speaker, Bill Krause. They got into a conversation about educational benefits and Bill said that if you were in the military and you exhausted your VA educational benefits, there are more benefits available to further your education.

 Our Veteran Affairs UUP web page (Gina D): Gina took a website training class with the UUP webmaster, Luke Williams, recently and learned a little about “word press”. She is not knowledgeable about website development and wants to learn, and will work on setting up a revised web page for this committee. She is a novice and this will take time unless someone assists her. Mike Knee has experience with Web development and building and with software similar to WordPress.  Norm Payne spoke articulately about his experience with WordPress, including developing Websites for community groups. Gina welcomes any assistance with overhauling and improving our current web page.

* If you have a photo of yourself in uniform, please send to Gina to add it to our “small” photo gallery on our web page.
1. Empire College gives veteran students a huge Welcome (Jacqui B): Jacqui came to talk about what her college gives veteran students that most other colleges cannot. Empire State is very friendly to students that are veterans and also students with disabilities. She is on the UUP committee for disabled members and they are now working on a handbook on accessibility for members at their campus. She explained this is not just about physical access, but issues surrounding mental challenges. *Her committee would like to work with this committee to include us in the handbook.* People on this committee need to let Gina know they wish to participate with this soon.
* Right now her committee is creating a survey for the campus to gain information on this topic. She is finding members that do not have tenure/permanent appointment and are not revealing disability issues (physical and mental), which is resulting in some members having severe medical problems later on while at work.
* Jacqui would like to have a “Best Practices” brochure written on what to do for employees that have disabilities, especially the problems that are hidden.
* At this meeting she discussed the overall Empire college program and how veterans use them. What is happening is campuses are not bending for the veteran and their college does bend. They have less stringent rules.
* *Jacqui thinks this committee could benefit from having someone from Empire College Veteran Affairs to come meet our committee and talk.*
* *Jacqui will send Gina web links that may benefit our Veterans web site also. She has a Veteran Services graduate site. Gina will contact her.*
1. Task Force for veteran students at Morrisville (Tom H): Tom discussed his initiative to get a student veteran organization on his campus. He is trying to get space for veterans to network and spend time together while on campus, but with administrative budget cuts it is making it difficult right now.
* Tom also discussed how a member at war at another SUNY campus cannot get DSI due to the law. People should not be penalized due to being called into active military service.
1. Falling through the cracks due to deployment: Veteran student’s GPA’s are suffering due to being deployed, and this affects TAP and PEL financial services.
* What other things are falling in due to the vet being deployed? Apparently TAP, PEL and DSI are to name a few.
* William B. asked what happens when a UUP member is a student and a veteran—what happens when they deploy? There are negative consequences while they are absent from their job and also with their grades/courses. We need to find out answers about this.
* Discussed going to the Outreach Committee about legislative action about all the applicable issues discussed here for change.
* *Idea: have an article in “The Voice” about “what are the difficulties we are having now” when a UUP member deploys and request the member to respond back to us.*
1. Thank a Vet program in Niagara County (David F): This is David’s first time to this committee (welcome David. He spoke about a card that is given out to veterans in his county that gives discounts to the holder of the card in a variety of businesses as a thank you for your services.

Today our resolution will be presented by Tom Hogle and William Borgstede.

The meeting adjourned at Noon.

*Meeting notes written by Gina Doty*

*Edits welcome*